



The Indianapolis Radio Club Newsletter

Founded 1914

"The oldest continuously operating Amateur Radio Club in the United States"

May 2008 Newsletter

Upcoming Meetings:

June 13: Annual Auction

Highlights of the May 9, 2008 meeting:

The meeting was started at 7:30 by club President Tom Chance, K9XV, starting self introductions. There were 58 in attendance at the meeting. Tom asked about interest in changing the newsletter list to an open reflector, it was decided to make this change. There was a report on the status of the bus to Dayton. As of the meeting night, there were 34 of the possible 44 seats on the bus sold. Volunteers were solicited for a backup auctioneer for the June meeting. Chuck, W9IH, volunteered. Field Day status report: The IRC, along with the RCA and W9IMS clubs will sponsor a Field Day site at the Marion County Fairgrounds at the 4-H building. It will be a "2A" station, with 2 HF rigs, as well as GOTA and VHF stations. Primary power will be battery. There will also be a picnic area available.

Judy Gardner, AA9GW, was recognized for her years of service to the Radio Club as treasurer. She and her husband Steve are moving to Florida. Jay Willever, K9LJW, will be completing Judy's term as treasurer.

Education report: There were not enough students to have a spring tech class. If anyone is interested in a fall tech class, let Tom Price, WB9UNG, know.

Chief operator Steve Wendt, KB9RDS, reported that the club station, W9JP, was operational for the Indiana QSO Party. 54 contacts were made, mainly on 40 meters.

Bob, N9FIM, has tickets available for the Indianapolis Hamfest, coming up on Saturday, July 12. Mike, N9FEB, thanked all those that helped with the 500 Festival Mini Marathon. There were 85 amateur radio operators involved in this year's Mini Marathon.

The ARRL is soliciting nominations for Indiana Section Manager. Jim Sellers is not going to run again.

Chuck, W9IH, gave a presentation on some troubleshooting that he and KC9KZM did to control RFI problems with an ATT U-Verse installation. The system is prone to interference from 80 meter signals. The U-Verse system is what is known as a "VDSL" system, operating in the 25 Kc to 8.5 Mc range. The system modem is where the system will lock up. This modem counts errors, and if there are too many errors that are counted in a 15 minute period, it will lock up. Lower ham bands, such as 80, 40, and some 20 meter frequencies are where the problem occurs. According to FCC rules, if interference occurs, the ham must shut down his or her station until a solution can be found. The problem is with the above ground phone lines, acting as antennas. Underground lines are better.

To fix the problem, first make sure the station is well grounded, with good SWR figures. Physically separate the antennas from the phone line if possible. Above all, be friendly, get ATT to send out the U-Verse team. Add RF choke to Telco lines. With chokes installed, power levels of up to 500 Watts were workable. For more details, point your browser to <http://indyradioclub.org/rfi-att-u-verse.htm>.

Next, Hank, K9LZJ, displayed and talked about the magnetic loop antenna that he crafted from 1" copper tubing. It is 39" in diameter, and uses a vacuum variable capacitor that Hank found surplus from Russia. The antenna is about 85% efficient on 20 meters, and about 99% efficient on 10 meters. It is remotely tuned with a stepper motor, and is good for mounting in an attic. It works best at 10 to 15 feet above ground.

Next, Tom, K9XV and Mike, W9RE used the IRC audience as their "rehearsal" for their presentation they were going to present at Dayton on "Real vs. Theoretical Antenna Measurements". They presented a practical method for antenna measurements. Their interest in getting "real world" performance characteristics on 40 meter antennas is what sparked the idea for this presentation. Tom and Mike used their home stations, which are 2.3 miles apart for the antenna range measurements. They utilized the Windows based software called "S-Meter Lite" to do their measurements.

Tom also gave a short presentation on the necessity of using a notch filter on the venerable MFJ 259B analyzer, when working in RF rich environments, pointing out that when attempting to analyze an antenna system, the analyzer can become confused and give erroneous readings due to stray RF.

Ham Radio News:

W9JP WILL BE ON THE AIR FOR FIELD DAY 2008

For the first time since 1973, the Indianapolis Radio Club will sponsor a Field Day Operation. The site will be at the Marion County Fairgrounds, on Indy's Southeast side. Set up begins at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 28, with operation starting at 1:00 p.m. local time and running until 1:00 p.m. Sunday. All are invited to participate, and are needed, since we will be running 4 stations, including a Get On The Air station. For more info go to <http://indyradioclub.org/ircfdops.htm> , or contact Jim Rinehart, K9RU (email k9ru@arrl.net or phone 356-1908), or Dave Jarvis, N9KZJ (email n9kzj@earthlink.net or phone 359-4738), or Tom Chance, K9XV (email k9xv@arrl.net or phone 862-8483).

INDIANAPOLIS VE Testing Schedule for 2008

July 12th (At a separate location with the Indianapolis Hamfest)

August 16th

Sept 6th

October 4th

November 1st

December 6th

Calling in advance to ensure testing availability is suggested but not mandatory.

SPONSOR: Indianapolis Radio Club (W9JP)

LOCATION: Indianapolis Training Center 2820 N. Meridian Street.

CONTACTS: Gale Wuollet, AA9WU (h) 317-849-8449, or Dr. Jay Wright, KK9L 317-203-3335.

All testing at the Indianapolis Training Center starts at 9:00 am and the last test will be administered no later than 11:00 a.m.

NEW CLUB HAS A FITTING CALL SIGN

The newly organized all YL club "Chick Factor International" was granted a very fitting vanity call recently by the FCC: W9YL. Heather Heninger is in the process of putting together a very nice web site for the group. Point your browser to <http://www.freewebs.com/chickfactor/> to check it out.

LOCAL HAM IN IRAQ

Jeff Hammer, N9NIC, sent me this information.

The 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Indiana National Guard mobilized for Operation Iraqi Freedom in December 2007. I am serving as the 1-152 Cavalry's Intelligence Officer at Camp Taji which is on the northwest side of Baghdad. While there is still quite a bit of enemy activity around the country, it is fairly quiet in the immediate area of our Camp. I have a number of additional duties including Electronic Warfare Officer, Antiterrorism Officer, and Foreign Disclosure Officer. And on the voluntary side, I am the Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS) http://www.netcom.army.mil/mars_station_custodian. We recently received our military station call sign, AEN5NAA. It is historic in the fact that it is the first call sign issued to a National Guard station in Iraq. I have handled 24 messages so far.

The history doesn't stop there. Part of what I am about to tell you appeared in an issue of QST very late last year or maybe early this year. MAJ Scott Hedberg (AD7MI/YI9MI), also a Military Intelligence Officer, had set up a MARS station at Camp Taji, although I didn't know he was there at the time. He and a number of HAM and MARS operators made history sending and receiving an unprecedented number of MARSgrams. During his tour he also had bestowed upon him another piece of history in the making - the Baghdad Amateur Radio Society <http://www.usaars.com/bars.htm> station. The Society was originally started by KF4ESG, SFC Giovanni Saraos. The station now consists of an ICOM IC-7000, LDG autotuner RigiBlaster Pro, Kantronics KAM XL, and a Cushcraft MA5B along with a 20 amp MFJ Power supply. MAJ Hedberg donated a very nice rackmount case to house it all. The antenna was located on the Iraqi side of our Camp and about 10 of us went over to take it down one evening. I was only going to take 5 but I am glad we ended up with 10. Taking down an HF beam, no matter how small it is, is no easy task, especially when you have to provide security.

So now I am trying to figure out how to make the station successful. The Morale Welfare Recreation team told me I had to prove there was interest in the Amateur Radio activity before they would provide me any support. I put out a flyer, and within a few hours of its release I had twenty interested soldiers, and as I am writing this sentence another one just came in. I am having the first meeting to introduce everyone to the plan on May 29th. And would you believe it, another interested soldier just dropped me an e-mail. This sergeant told me his grandfather was really into Ham Radio but he died before the sergeant was born so he never learned anything about it and now he wants to take advantage of the opportunity.

I have a feeling that one station isn't going to be enough. If by chance anyone would want to support what I hope will be a truly historic project, the Baghdad Amateur Radio Society would greatly appreciate any donations of Amateur Radio books or equipment. I am hoping to have my Iraqi Amateur Radio license in time for Field Day and with all of

the interested personnel that I have I hope it can be a big event. One of my goals is to talk to [W9JP] since I noticed that you are having the first Field Day site since 1973.

ARMY MARS OFFERS FREE FATHER'S DAY MESSAGES FOR SOLDIERS OVERSEAS

I noticed this article mentioning Jeff Hammer, N9NIC, in the ARRL newsletter:

If Jeff Hammer, N9NIC, gets his way, he'll be an awfully busy soldier in the run-up to Father's Day on June 15. Captain Hammer, who represents the Army Military Affiliate Radio System (Army MARS) in Iraq, has appealed to the families of troops deployed overseas to "shower down with Father's Day messages" for their loved ones.

According to Army MARS Public Affairs Director Bill Sexton, AAA9PC/AAR1FP/N1IN, these free messages -- called MARSgrams -- date back to the Korean War when many thousands were delivered. The service continued during the Vietnam conflict and the first Gulf War, but had fallen off with the advent of e-mail and cell phones.

As the military's Middle East operations continue, Sexton said that the responses from that area indicate that the soldiers treasure the printed MARSgrams as mementos of their deployment: "It's not just a greeting. E-mail just isn't the same." MARSgram traffic spurted last Thanksgiving and Christmas, and Captain Hammer reports that he is "100 percent set up" to handle MARSgrams for Father's Day.

A National Guardsman from Indiana, Hammer arrived in Baghdad just this spring after previously serving in Afghanistan. In addition to volunteering for the MARS assignment, he is acting as station custodian for the Baghdad Amateur Radio Society. Hammer shipped in his own low-power ham station and began direct receipt of messages May 25; he has to shoehorn his volunteer Amateur Radio activity into his off-duty hours.

On Sunday, June 1, five soldiers including Hammer gathered for a meeting of the Baghdad ARS. Besides Hammer, three Amateur Radio operators are part of the group: Warrant Officer 2 Edward Mendez, N3BZA, who also operated the military MARS station ABM4USS in Korea for an Aviation Maintenance Company; Barry Coronado, KC8RTK, a Department of Defense employee, and Wayne Gale, W0GTO, a contractor.

The subject of Sunday's meeting was preparing for the hoped-for Father's Day surge. After a period of instruction on MARS procedure during which the participants wrote their own MARSgrams, Hammer took the members to his personal MARS station to attempt transmission despite difficult propagation conditions.

"We are only running 5 W on a Yaesu 817, but we wanted to give it a try if for no other reason than to see the equipment and demonstrate the procedure," Hammer messaged afterward. "God must have been smiling down on us because after only a few attempts we connected to AEN3QT in Qatar on 40 meters and got all the messages through without any problems."

Family members can easily send free MARSgrams overseas by entering their message on the MARSgram Web site <<http://www.mymars.org/>>. The Army MARS WinLink system will automatically relay the Iraq-bound messages to Hammer and his helpers; they will produce printouts and envelopes and hand them off to the Military Postal Service for final delivery. A MARSgram travels much faster than ordinary mail and can be delivered wherever American troops serve.

Army MARS is a Department of Defense-sponsored organization of more than 2700 Amateur Radio operators who provide emergency communications backup for government agencies in times of civil calamity; active-duty service personnel are welcome to join. Parallel MARS units serve the Air Force and Navy-Marine Corps, making the three-prong program more than 5000 members strong.

LOCAL PHONE PATCH REPEATER UPDATE

I received this from Mike Palmer, N9FEB:

Note for future reference, the 443.250 (100PL) repeater DOES have auto-patch on it. Besides [the IRA] 147.120 machine, I think these are it.

ARRL INDIANA SECTION MANAGER POSITION STILL OPEN

The ARRL will be re-soliciting for nominations for the Indiana Section Manager's position in the July QST -- and once again in the August QST.

The "Happenings" column will have an article that reports the upcoming Section Manager election cycle.

For a little background in the re-solicitation, the notice that nominations were open for the next term of Indiana Section Manager (beginning July 1) was announced in January and February QSTs.

The receipt deadline of early March came and went without any nominations for Indiana Section Manager. We expect Jim, K9ZBM, will be staying on as SM until a new Section Manager is properly named through nomination or election.

The protocol indicates that ARRL needs to re-solicit for nominations for the Indiana SM position. The re-solicited term of office will be for 18 months (starting in January 2009) instead of the normal 24 months (2 years) beginning in July 2008.

Essentially, nominations are already open. The nomination period will be announced in the July and August QST. The nomination period ends on September 5, 2008.

If there is more than one valid nominee for the Indiana Section Manager position, then an election would be held in the Fall. The winner would then take office on January 1, 2009. If just one valid nomination arrives by the deadline, that person would be considered elected and his or her term of office would begin on January 1, 2009.

More information on the SM nomination/election process and procedures are found at this link: <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/org/smterms.html>.

FCC LOOKS TO RAISE VANITY CALL SIGN FEES

The FCC released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Order (NPRM) on May 8 seeking to raise fees for Amateur Radio vanity call signs. Currently, a vanity call sign costs \$11.70 and is good for 10 years; the new fee, if the FCC plan goes through, will go up to \$12.30 for 10 years, an increase of \$.60.

The FCC is authorized by the Communications Act of 1934 (as amended) to collect vanity call sign fees to recover the costs associated with that program. The vanity call sign regulatory fee is payable not only when applying for a new vanity call sign, but also upon renewing a vanity call sign for a new term. Instructions on how to comment on this NPRM are available on the FCC Web site at, <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/howtocomment.html>.

The vanity call sign fee has fluctuated over the 12 years of the current program -- from a low of \$12 to a high of \$50; the current fee of \$11.70 is the lowest the fee has been since the inception of the vanity call sign program. The FCC said it anticipates some 15,000 Amateur Radio vanity call sign "payment units" or applications during the next fiscal year, collecting \$184,500 in fees from the program.

The vanity call sign regulatory fee is payable not only when applying for a new vanity call sign, but also upon renewing a vanity call sign for a new term. The first vanity call sign licenses issued under the current Amateur Radio vanity call sign program that began in 1996 came up for renewal two years ago. Those holding vanity call signs issued prior to 1996 are exempt from having to pay the vanity call sign regulatory fee at renewal, however. That's because Congress did not authorize the FCC to collect regulatory fees until 1993. Such "heritage" vanity call sign holders do not appear as vanity licensees in the FCC.

Amateur Radio licensees may file for renewal only within 90 days of their license expiration date. All radio amateurs must have an FCC Registration Number (FRN) before filing any application with the Commission. Applicants can obtain an FRN by going to the ULS site at, <http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls>, and clicking on the "New Users Register" link. You must supply your Social Security Number to obtain an FRN.

CHINESE OLYMPIC STATIONS ARE ON-THE-AIR

Special Event stations for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games began operating May 18, running through Wednesday, September 17. Five special calls, representing the five rings of the Olympic flag, will be on the air: BT1OB, BT1OJ, BT1OH, BT1OY and BT1ON. The last letter of the call sign corresponds to the color of each of the rings of the Olympic flag -- Beibei (Blue), Jingjing (Black), Huanhuan (Red), Yingying (Yellow) and Nini (Green). Zheng Feng, BA4EG, will be the QSL manager for all stations. QSLs can be sent either direct or via the bureau and will begin to be answered in October. A Web site supporting the Special Event stations will include an on line log search, QSL card received and sent status, as well as other information <http://www.bj2008ses.com.cn/> Award criteria will soon be posted on the site.

-- Thanks to "The Daily DX" for this information

WELCOME NEW MEMBER

John Stevens, N9JYO.

FEEL FREE TO SHARE OUR NEWSLETTER

If you belong to any other radio groups, please feel free to share our newsletter with them. They can also sign up to be on our mailing list by filling out the form available at <http://www.indyradioclub.org/rqstnewsletter.htm>.

SEND ME YOUR HAM RADIO NEWS

If anyone has any items for the newsletter, please send them to Ken Bandy at kc9glq@arrl.net

Signals from the Past:

From the May, 1956 Indianapolis Radio Club *Amachewer*:

The amateur in 1990 may be working on his WAP (Worked All Planets) Certificate. He will be in communication with the Moon and the Planets in the not too distant future if the present space travel program activity is kept up. Scientists are confident that during

the International Geophysical Year (18 months) they will crash the space barrier and launch an observable satellite.

Upcoming Area Radio Events:

- Saturday, July 12: 38th Annual Indianapolis Hamfest held at Camp Sertoma, US 52 and German Church Road. Go to <http://www.indyhamfest.com> for more info
 - Saturday, August 2: 8th Annual Broad Ripple Hamfest This “tailgate” hamfest will be held at 7373 Westfield Blvd. Go to <http://indyhams.org/docs/Broad%20Ripple%20Hamfest.pdf> for more info.
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Current IRC Officers:

- President: Tom Chance, K9XV - ..EMAIL k9xv@arrl.net
- Vice Pres.: Dave Miller, K9RTT - ..EMAIL dmiller@ivytech.edu
- Secretary: Ken Bandy, KC9GLQ - ..EMAIL kc9glq@arrl.net
- Treasurer: Jay Willever - ..EMAIL k9ljw@arrl.net
- Chief Operator: Steve Wendt, KB9RDS - ..EMAIL kb9rds@arrl.net
- Dir. at large: Jim Rinehart, K9RU – EMAIL k9ru@arrl.net
- Dir. at large: Tom Price, WB9UNG – EMAIL pricetr@comcast.net
- Dir. at large: Hank Wolfla, K9LZJ – EMAIL hwolfla@insightbb.com
- W9JP Trustee: Don Hemenover, N9DOO – EMAIL don9doo@lightbound.com